

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 156226
ORIGIN ARA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 156226

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: US, PN, SENV, TOCY, EWWT

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY ON SEA LEVEL CANAL STUDY
UPDATE

1. AMBASSADOR POPPER IS SCHEDULED TO TESTIFY TUESDAY,
JUNE 27 BEFORE PANAMA CANAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF HOUSE MERCHANT
MARINE AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE CONCERNING POSSIBLE UPDATING
OF 1970 STUDY OF FEASIBILITY OF ATLANTIC-PACIFIC INTER-
OCEANIC SEA-LEVEL CANAL. DETAILS OF PROPOSALS BY SENATOR
GRAVEL AND CHAIRMAN MURPHY CONTAINED SEPTEL.

2. IT IS DEPT UNDERSTANDING SUPPORTED BY CONVERSATIONS
IN PANAMA WITH EDWIN FABREGA JUNE 7, THAT GOP IS AWARE OF
GRAVEL BILL AND HAS NO OBJECTION TO IT, INCLUDING ITS
TIMING (A PROBABLE START IN FY 1979), PROCEDURE BY WHICH
APPOINTEES RECOMMENDED BY PANAMA WOULD BE APPOINTED BY
PRESIDENT, AND POSSIBLE CONFLICT OF INTEREST DERIVING FROM
MEMBERSHIP (AS DISTINCT FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION) IN
COMMISSION THAT WOULD STUDY POSSIBLE ROUTES EXTERNAL TO
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PANAMA.

3. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO CONFIRM GOP ATTITUDE TOWARD
GRAVEL BILL AND PROPOSED UPDATING OF SEA-LEVEL CANAL STUDY.
PLEASE REPLY BY FRIDAY JUNE 23. VANCE

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